

Eye Spy

by fickleminster

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Summary: While attending a survival training camp in the forest, the dragon riders find themselves being stalked by an unseen creature.

1. Chapter 1

****Author's Note**:** I am aware that the TV series will do this in a week or so, but here's my take on it.

This fic is a project that will serve mainly as a means for me to retain my sanity in school. I have an outline planned out already, but I can only write when my muse hits me, when I have the time, or when I just need to take a break from everything else. That being said, please be assured that I fully intend to see this story through to the end.

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><p>Thornado growls softly as his rider sighs and strokes its unbroken left wing. Stoick looks up worriedly when Gobber makes his way over to him.<p>

"That's some damage he took from the cliffs, but with Gothi's herbs and enough rest, he should be fine after a few days," Gobber assures his friend, shooting Thornado a toothy grin.

Stoick nods and sighs again, turning his gaze towards the forest. "If only Hiccup were here, he'd â€"

"Chief!"

The two Vikings turn to see Mulch running up to them, Bucket trailing not far behind him.

"There's a ship that just arrived at the docks, and the captain's asking to speak with you," Mulch explains, panting slightly.

Bucket nods frantically. "Big ship!" he exclaims enthusiastically before frowning sadly. "But it looks broken."

Stoick nods in understanding and turns back to Gobber. "Take care of Thornado for me while I settle this matter. With Hiccup and the others away on their survival camp, you're the next best person who knows how to care for the dragons."

"Aye, they won't be back for a few more days, but don't you worry! Leave him to me," Gobber replies, petting the Thunderdrum's head and earning an affectionate purr.

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><p>As Bucket had described it, the ship was large but it had clearly seen better days. A good portion of its sails were ripped while its body sported at least ten holes and no few burn marks, complete with pieces of wood jutting out at several places.<p>

The crew, numbered around twenty, waits patiently on their worn vessel. Their captain stands at the edge of the docks, perking up when Stoick finally appears to address him.

"I am Stoick the Vast, chief of the Island of Berk," Stoick introduces himself. "What business do you have here?"

The captain gives a small respectful bow before replying. "Greetings, sir. My name is Mando, and this is my crew," he gestures to the crowd behind him. "We are a band of travelers, heading towards the northern mainland. We have been at sea for a month now, and we humbly request that you allow us to remain on your island for a week and provide us with supplies to restock and repair our ship."

Mando clears his throat nervously before continuing. "We do not have much to give in return, but my crew and I, we are good with our hands. We are willing to do work around your island as payment. Sharpening tools, herding animals, chopping wood â€" just name it, and it will be done," he promises.

Stoick looks thoughtful as he considers the offer. Behind him, Mulch and Bucket eagerly start to discuss a list of chores that needed to be completed, trying unsuccessfully to be discreet. Mando breathes a sigh of relief when Stoick nods his head and smiles at him.

"Very well, I accept," he says, holding out his hand which Mando happily shakes.

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><p>"Has anybody seen Kinai?" Mando asks, looking around the ship. His crew members either shake their heads or respond with a negative answer before going back to their previous tasks.<p>

Night has fallen after their first day of work and the travelers have retired to their ship. Stoick had apologized for the lack of accommodation for their new guests, but Mando waved it off, assuring

him that they had no qualms about sleeping in their vessel.

The captain scans through the crowd once more, looking for their missing member. The boy was late. Everyone else had already returned from their work and was either in the midst of their dinner or preparing to turn in for the night.

"Hey Mando," a tired voice greets him from behind.

Mando turns around to see a raven-haired teen slowly making his way down the stairs. His posture leaves no doubt as to how exhausted he is, so Mando quickly pulls out a nearby chair for him. The boy gratefully sinks into it before slumping over the table and burying his face in his arms.

"Long day?" Mando pats the teen's back sympathetically, earning a muffled groan. "I am sorry, Kinai, but you know how it is. We have to work and earn our keep if we want to â€œ"

"I know, I knowâ€œ| We don't take anything we can't pay back. I get it," Kinai sighs, waving an arm lazily. "The guy who picked me sure knows how to make the best of it though."

Mando frowns, remembering the grumpy, skinny old Viking who had gleefully hauled the teen off to his house after Stoick had informed his people about the travelers' agreement to work for them for the next week. The captain swore he heard the man muttering something about fresh meat, but as much as he didn't like the ugly look in the Viking's eyes, according to the deal he had struck with Stoick, if any of the villagers wanted to claim one of his crew as a week-long personal servant, he could not refuse.

"Listen, Kinai," Mando starts with a serious tone, remembering what he had originally wanted to tell him. "The chief had to attend to other matters, so I did not get a chance to speak with him about it today, but â€œ"

"Don't bother," Kinai murmurs sadly, raising his head to stare at the captain with ice-blue eyes. "Mildewâ€œ| he saidâ€œ|"

But the teen is unable to finish his sentence and looks away dejectedly. Mando sighs in disappointment and reaches out to squeeze his shoulder in comfort.

"Then you know what you must do," he says solemnly.

Kinai nods.

* * *

><p>Author's Note: Hiccup and the other dragon riders will show up in the next chapter. As for Kinai's physical appearance, other than his black hair, think of Jack Frost from Dreamworks' Rise of the Guardians. In the meantime, thank you for reading. Comments are greatly appreciated :)

2. Chapter 2

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><p>"Hhkffg, hhnlld!"<p>

"Nice try Snotlout, but I don't think Hookfang can understand you."

"Hah! You look like Fishlegs when we dumped those spices into his soup the other night!"

"Wait, that was you?!"

"Er â€" it was Ruff's idea!"

"Was not! You totally suggested it!"

"Snotlout, what did I say about eating those berries?"

Hookfang snorts in amusement as his rider butchers up his verbal command to 'annihilate' the teens laughing at him, purposely ignoring the frantic hand signals. The other dragons are rumbling with laughter themselves, watching gleefully as Snotlout's tongue hangs out of his mouth, stuck in its position due to some foreign berries he ingested earlier.

"Okay guys, thanks to Snotlout, we've got our first lesson of the day," says Hiccup, trying to keep a straight face as he addresses the group. "Never eat anything without first making sure it's safe. Or else, you might end up likeâ€¦ well, that," he gestures to Snotlout, shooting him an exasperated look.

"You'd think he'd learn something from that trip to Outcast Island," Astrid sighs, rolling her eyes. "But then again," she smirks, "it's Snotlout we're talking about."

"Hh! Whs thh ssps th mnn?"

"As much as I definitely do not miss Snotlout's regular verbal skills, shouldn't we do something about it?" Fishlegs asks nervously.

Groaning, Hiccup reaches for their bag of equipment and rummages through it. "Astrid, could you and the twins head back to that stream we passed yesterday to collect more water? We're running a little low," he says, tossing them a few empty jugs before pulling out a small bowl.

"Sure! We'll be right back. Ruff, Tuff, let's go."

"And just what are you planning to do with that?" Fishlegs eyes the bowl in Hiccup's hand suspiciously as Astrid and the twins disappear into the forest, their dragons following not far behind.

"Oh, you knowâ€¦ Night Fury saliva has incredible healing properties," Hiccup grins, making sure to stay out of Snotlout's earshot as he winks at Fishlegs. The latter sniggers quietly as Hiccup beckons Toothless over. "Hey bud, care to do the honors?"

Sharing his rider's enthusiasm, the Night Fury is more than happy to oblige and spits generously into the bowl in his hands.

"Hhkffg! Whhr ydnng?"

Hiccup and Fishlegs turn around to see Snotlout trying unsuccessfully to appease an agitated Hookfang. With narrowed eyes, the dragon is flexing its claws and growling dangerously at something in the trees. The rustling sound of something moving through the forest sends Toothless and Meatlug into a defensive stance, causing them to growl in warning as well.

"Meatlug, what is it?"

"Toothless, what's wrong?"

Putting the bowl gingerly on the ground, Hiccup moves to Toothless's side and places a hand on his head. His dragon does not respond and moves towards the trees, sniffing cautiously. Hookfang and Meatlug do the same, scouting their surroundings for unexpected company.

Letting out a sharp roar, Meatlug abruptly lunges forward and glares at something in the distance. Hookfang and Toothless immediately turn their attention to the same spot, their growls rising in volume. Behind them, their confused riders squint and peer into the forest, but they see nothing.

A tense moment follows with the three dragons glaring at something hidden within the trees. Their riders hold their breaths and no one dares to move. The silence is broken only by the growls of the dragons and the rustling of leaves around them. That is, until Snotlout aims a swift kick at Hookfang's foot and causes him to whip around in surprise.

Hookfang shakes his head and blinks in confusion, glancing around curiously before growling at his rider and swatting Snotlout with his tail, sending the teen sprawling onto the ground.

"Toothless? Toothless!" Hiccup calls out with worry when his dragon doesn't answer. It is only when he snaps his fingers in front of the Night Fury's face does he react, blinking in surprise and turning to look at Hiccup.

It takes Fishlegs a tackle hug to finally get Meatlug's attention and the Gronckle is in the midst of licking the teen's face when Astrid returns with a pair of bickering twins behind her.

"What happened?" she asks, noticing the tense atmosphere between them as she places the jugs near their food.

"The dragons sensed something in the forest," Hiccup explains, frowning. "We didn't see anything and we don't know what it was, but then they justâ€¦ it's like they fell into a trance or something."

"What do you mean they fell into a trance?"

"They just kept staring at the same spot, like they were dazed," Fishlegs says. "Took us a while to snap them out of it and get their

attention."

"Whatever it was, I don't think it's here anymore," Hiccup sighs, looking around warily. "Maybe it was just something passing by and â€"

With a started yelp, Ruffnut stumbles into Astrid when Tuffnut shoves her a little too hard. Caught off balance, Astrid staggers forwards and accidentally kicks the bowl on the ground before Hiccup can reach out to steady her, spilling its contents everywhere.

"Hhy! Whh bhht mmh?" Snotlout splutters for attention, rubbing his butt from where Hookfang had smacked him to the ground.

But his protest falls on deaf ears as everyone else stares in shock at the way the liquid that had been in the bowl starts to eat through the grass on the ground, leaving behind patches of barren earth.

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><p>Author's Note: Not sure if it's obvious or not, but can anyone tell what the heck just happened?

3. Chapter 3

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><p>Fishlegs and Snotlout would take the physical method: the former giving his dragon a tackle hug, the latter kicking some part of his dragon and earning a hard whack in retaliation. Hiccup and Astrid would simply snap their fingers in front of their dragons' snouts while Ruffnut and Tuffnut would pull funny faces and make weird noises, throwing out the occasional insult.<p>

In any case, one thing is for sure: they are not alone in the forest.

Over the course of the next two days, the riders become increasingly aware that something is watching them during their survival camp. No one has gotten a glimpse of whatever it is, but their dragons could clearly sense the mysterious entity whenever it got too close to the group. Although they would growl in warning and take up protective stances around their riders, they quickly fall into a strange trance and become unresponsive until the teens snap them out of whatever they had succumbed to.

There has yet to be a repeat of the acid-in-the-bowl incident, but they keep a closer eye on their belongings anyway, just in case.

Things finally come to a head on the last day of their camp.

"Alright, one quick flight around Berk and we can wrap up!" Astrid says, pulling herself up onto Stormfly's back.

"You guys go on ahead. I have to finish adjusting Toothless's tail

fin first," Hiccup explains, attention focused on the series of gears on the mechanical contraption as he tweaks it with the tool in his hand.

"We'll see you back in the village then," Astrid shrugs before turning to the other riders. "Let's â€" Hey, where's Tuffnut?"

"That doofus is looking for his saddle," Ruffnut replies, rolling her eyes from where she is sitting on her dragon's neck. "It wasn't near mine when we woke up this morning."

This tidbit of information caught Fishlegs's interest. "Do you keep your saddles in the same place?" he asks her.

"Well, duh! All our stuff's always next to each other."

"Something doesn't feel rightâ€"|" Fishlegs says, twiddling his thumbs nervously.

Throwing his arms into the air, Snotlout whines. "Who care about Tuff and his stupid saddle? Can we just go already?"

Hookfang gives a roar in response, nearly throwing the teen off his neck, but then the Monstrous Nightmare starts to growl at the forest.

"Not againâ€"|" Hiccup sighs as Toothless and the other dragons follow suit.

This time, however, they see Tuffnut emerging from the trees. The teen is pulling at his saddle, engaged in a tug-of-war with â€"

Everyone's eyes grow big as their jaws drop.

The saddle is suspended in mid-air and if not for the visible strain on the straps at the other end, Hiccup would say that Tuffnut was just putting on an act to scare them. But that is clearly not the case, so what is going on?

"Guys! A little help here?" Tuffnut yells at them, grunting as his grip starts to slip.

"Hookfang, annihilate!" Snotlout orders his dragon as Fishlegs lets out a squeak of fear at the invisible entity before them.

Toothless quickly grabs Hiccup by the back of his vest and pulls him out of the way when the creature releases its hold on Tuffnut's saddle and leaps towards them as Hookfang unleashes a blast of fire at it. Shielding his rider with a wing protectively, Toothless growls in warning and his eyes narrow into slits when a dark purple dragon suddenly materializes in front of them.

"It's a Changewing!" Fishlegs exclaims in surprise, recognizing the dragon.

Everyone holds their breath and watches as it approaches Toothless and Hiccup, sniffing curiously and eyeing the Night Fury.

"Fishlegs, what do we know about Changewings?" Hiccup asks, trying to

think of a plan.

"Um, this dragon can disappear into any environment and displays mimicking behavior. It can also hypnotize and spit acid," Fishlegs recites, counting off the dragon's abilities on his fingers.

"Mimickingâ€¦!" Hiccup murmurs to himself before his head jerks up in understanding. "I got it! Tuff, throw me your saddle!"

"What? But I just found it!"

"Just do what he says!" Astrid yells at him.

Indignantly, Tuffnut tosses it to Hiccup who flings it to the ground right in front of the Changewing. Immediately, the dragon snatches it up with its teeth and disappears, but the saddle remains visible to them and it looks as if it is dancing in the air.

After a few moments of watching the saddle move about on its own, the dragon reveals itself again and drops it in front of Hiccup, letting out a huff of annoyance. Stepping out from behind Toothless's wing, Hiccup carefully makes his way over to the Changewing with an arm outstretched. Cocking its head to the side, it doesn't move forward to meet his hand, but instead nudges the saddle towards him with a soft growl. Hiccup's shoulders droop slightly with disappointment at the lack of contact, but he shrugs it off and chuckles with relief, picking up the saddle.

"Care to explain what the heck just happened?" Astrid asks with a raised brow.

"This Changewing is the creature that our dragons sensed, but whenever it got too close and they tried to scare it off, it must have hypnotized them. That's why they fell into that trance," Hiccup reasons, shooting the dragon an awed look.

Fishlegs snaps his fingers in realization. "Changewings are also curious creatures," he supplies helpfully. "It must have seen Toothless spitting into the bowl and copied him, that's why it was filled with acid when Astrid knocked it over!"

"But what about the saddle?" Snotlout asks.

"Who cares? It can keep it," snorts Ruffnut, smirking as her twin glares at her.

"I guess it saw that all our dragons had saddles on them and it wanted one too," Hiccup shrugs as he tosses the saddle back to Tuffnut, noticing the Changewing eyeing it closely.

"That makes sense," Astrid agrees. "So what now?"

"We're headed back to the village anyway, so maybe Hiccup could make a new saddle for it?" Fishlegs suggests.

Hiccup nods. "I can do that. Alright guys, let go."

* * *

><p>Author's Note: As I've mentioned in the first chapter, this is my take on the introduction of the Changewing. I have seen the corresponding episode (i.e. Gems of a Different Color) in Riders of Berk and I must say, I never thought the Changewing would be portrayed as such a fearsome dragon, but I thought it was pretty cool nonetheless. In any case, consider yourselves officially warned that the Changewing in this story will be much mellower than that since I planned my story based on information from the HTTYD Short: Book of Dragons.

4. Chapter 4

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><p>"What do you mean 'hide the dragons'? And who are all these people around the village?"<p>

Gobber sighs before explaining the travelers' temporary residence in Berk while they repair their ship and stock up on supplies. "We don't know what they think about dragons, haven't had a chance to ask the Captain about it since he's busy running around all the time, but yer father thinks it's best to lay 'em low fer awhile, at least until we're sure they won't go reaching for a weapon when they see one."

"Makes sense, I guess," Hiccup shrugs.

"Don't worry about it! They'll be gone by tomorrow, so it's only fer a day!" assures Gobber, patting the teen on the back. "How did yer survival camp go?"

Everyone jumps in to talk about their adventure with the Changewing as the blacksmith and the riders herd their dragons back into the forest.

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><p>Fishlegs and the twins have already returned back to their houses, leaving Astrid and Snotlout tagging along with Hiccup as he heads towards the forge to make the new saddle.<p>

"When I get my hands on one of those guys, I'm gonna make him clean my room!" declares Snotlout, puffing his chest out in a show of superiority.

"They're not slaves, Snotlout," scolds Astrid as she glares at him. "Sure, they offered to do work for us while they're here, but that doesn't mean you can boss them around."

"Oh yeah? Well if they're staying here and taking our food, then they have to do whatever we want! Tough luck for â€" Hey!"

Snotlout whirls around when he swings his arm and smacks it against something hard next to him. Several pieces of firewood clatter to the ground as the person carrying it stumbles backwards at the force of the Viking's arm.

"Watch where you're going!" Snotlout snarls, glaring at the bewildered raven-haired teen with the pile of firewood in his arms.

"S-sorry! I was just passing by, didn't think you would suddenly stick your hand out," the boy apologizes, stuttering slightly at the heated look on the Viking's face.

Astrid punches Snotlout in the arm while Hiccup bends down to retrieve the fallen firewood. "Don't worry about it," he smiles comfortingly. "No harm done, right Snotlout?"

"Are you kidding me? He needs to clean my entire house for that!" Snotlout protests, earning another hard punch from Astrid.

"Don't listen to him," she says, turning to the teen and eyeing the large load in his arms. "You need any help with that?"

"Oh no no no! Please don't trouble yourselves! I got this," he rushes to reply, shooting them what is supposed to be a reassuring smile. "If you could put those on top, I'll be on my way," he says, nodding his head at the fallen firewood in Hiccup's hands.

"I know you guys are working to pay for supplies, but I guess we should thank you for all your help around the village," Hiccup says gratefully as he adds the firewood on top of the pile. "My name's Hiccup, by the way. And this is Astrid."

The raven-haired teen smiles cheerfully at them. "I'm Kinai. It's a pleasure to meet you, Hiccup and Astrid."

"Where are you going with all that?" asks Astrid.

Kinai's friendly grin drops into a grimace. "Mildew wanted to stock up a month's worth of firewood," he explains. "After that, I don't know. Probably wants me to fix his roof or something next."

The three Vikings winced in sympathy at the mention of Mildew's name.

"Knowing him, he probably declared you his servant all week and is milking every ounce of energy from your soul. How's he treating you?"

"He's â€" uhâ€"|" Kinai hesitates, unsure as to how to describe the old Viking without potentially offending them.

"Rude and bad-tempered?"

"Demanding and bitter?"

"A grumpy old jerk who should just do us all a favor and throw himself and that sheep of his off a cliff?"

"Snotlout!"

"What? You know you were thinking itâ€"|"

Kinai laughs, tension draining out of him as his shoulders sag with relief. "All of the above," he says, shrugging helplessly.

Hiccup smiles encouragingly and pats him on the arm. "Yeah, well, hang in there. You guys are leaving tomorrow, right? You'll be free from his clutches in no time."

"Thanks Hiccup. Well, I'd better get going," Kinai shifts to adjust his grip on his load before setting off. "See you around!"

"I should start working on that saddle," Hiccup sighs once Kinai is out of sight. "Hopefully it'll be done by tomorrow and we can give it to that Changewing."

"Stormfly and the other dragons should be keeping him company, so he won't be causing any trouble," Astrid says, giving him a light shove towards the forge. "Now come on, get to it!"

* * *

><p>"And just what do you think you're doing? I told you to fix the roof, not the ladder! Stupid boy, don't you know how to listen to instructions?" Mildew snarls at a startled Kinai.<p>

"B-but the ladder isn't sturdy enough!" the teen tries to explain. "I was going to fix the roof after I'm done with â€"

"No more excuses, boy!" the Viking growls angrily, shaking his staff at him. "You think just because it's your last day of work you can slack off? Now get up there!" he yells, taking a swing at his head.

Yelping in shock, Kinai swiftly ducks and drops his tools, scrambling to place the ladder against Mildew's house.

"Go on! What are you waiting for?"

Gulping nervously, he begins to climb, his knuckles white as he slowly makes his way up.

* * *

><p>Hiccup smiles proudly at the finished saddle resting on the forge's workbench. After sending Astrid and Snotlout back to the forest to help him take measurements, he was able to craft the saddle according to the Changewing's specifications.<p>

Nodding to himself in satisfaction, he yawns as he stretches his arms over his head.

"Nighttime already?" he says to himself, noticing the dark skies outside the forge. "Time to head home then. I'll deliver the saddle tomorrow."

* * *

><p>"Are you finished yet? You know you can't leave until my roof is fixed!"<p>

Kinai sighs when his tired hands finally hammer the last nail in. "I'm done!" he calls down, sending Mildew a glare which he hopes the Viking wouldn't catch.

"Finally! Now get out of here!"

Cursing the ungrateful Viking under his breath, Kinai begins to descend the ladder but he only manages to take two steps before the next rung he steps on suddenly gives way with a sickening crack of splintering wood.

Letting out a cry of fear, his hands grasp desperately at something to hold on to, but the exhaustion in his overworked body prevents his reflexes from reacting in time and Kinai feels himself falling for several horrifying seconds.

The ground rushes up to meet him as he crashes to the earth and everything turns black.

* * *

><p>Author's Note: Huh, looks like my chapters are getting longer and longer. But you guys aren't complaining, are you?

Anyway, I am in need of some suggestions. Namely, ideas for payback on Mildew. If you like, I can get the Changewing to help out too, so if anybody has anything they would like to see, please do let me know.

Thank you for reading. Comments are greatly appreciated :)

5. Chapter 5

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><p>Eyeing the saddle in Hiccup's hands excitedly, the Changewing bounces on its feet as the teen makes his way over. From the way the dragon's wings and tail are twitching in anticipation, everyone can tell how impatient he is to be saddled while he tries to remain as still as possible as Hiccup adjusts the leather appendage onto his body.<p>

"There you go!" Hiccup tightens the last strap and steps back to admire his handiwork. "What do you think?"

The Changewing cranes his head to inspect his new saddle and hops around a little, testing the saddle's feel on his back. Satisfied, he emits a purr of delight and nudges Hiccup's cheek, earning a chuckle from the Viking.

"Alright, step aside! Time to show this dragon who's the best rider around here!" Tuffnut boasts, shoving his way past the teens.

"Yeah, that would be me!" Ruffnut reaches over and yanks at her twin's hair, pulling him backwards as she strides in front of him.

Snotlout sneers at them. "Oh puh-lease! Only I am worthy enough to ride the awesome Changewing!" He pushes them aside and makes his way

towards the dragon.

"Here we go!" Astrid sighs to herself before taking control of the situation. "Guys! Let the Changewing decide who should ride him. He's not a toy, you know."

"Astrid's right," Hiccup steps in to support her, speaking firmly. "I know everyone's eager to have a go at riding the Changewing, but we should let him choose his rider."

"Um, guys?"

Everyone turns to Fishlegs, who takes a deep breath nervously. "I don't mean to spoil the mood or anything, but doesn't anybody think it's strange that the Changewing's been pestering us for a saddle?" he asks. "I mean, he's smart and he obviously knows that each one of us already has our own dragon, so why get us to make him a saddle if all of us are already taken?"

"Fishlegs, what are you saying?" Astrid frowns.

"I'm not sure, it's just a theory but what if he wants his own rider?"

As if on cue, the Changewing lets out a roar and leaps into the forest, heading in the direction of the village as it disappears from view.

"Oh no, I think he's going to get someone to ride him!" realizes Hiccup, rushing over to Toothless. "We have to find that Changewing before he kidnaps some unsuspecting Viking and forces him on a joyride!"

"Everyone, split up and follow that dragon!" orders Astrid as she mounts Stormfly.

* * *

><p>"Kinai? Kinai!"<p>

The teen in question groans and blinks his eyes, squinting as sunlight rushes past his eyelids. Rolling onto his side, one hand reaches up to touch the bump on his head as a gentle hand rests on his hair.

"Kinai, are you all right?"

"M-Mando?"

Chuckling, the Captain nods in relief. "It's me, lad. That was quite a fall you took last night."

"What? What h- W-what time is it?" Kinai frowns, struggling to get his mind under focus.

"Three hours since sunrise," Mando replies before flashing him an excited grin. "Kinai, listen! You'll never believe what"

Mando jerks backwards when the teen suddenly bolts upright, panic written all over his face.

"Whoa, slow down there! You â€œ"

"Last night, I didn't â€œ" he's still â€œ"

"Kinai, calm down!" Mando grabs his shoulders, forcing the teen to look at him. "It's okay, everything's okay. Go outside and take a look for yourself. That is, if it is all right with you?"

The last part was directed at Gothi, standing off to the side, and it is only then that Kinai realizes that he is lying on a bed in the village healer's house. Sending him a nod and a kind smile, the mute woman gestures towards the door, granting her patient permission to leave.

Mando helps the teen to his feet, supporting him as he wobbles slightly while trying to regain his balance. Stepping outside, Kinai looks around in confusion, not seeing anything out of the ordinary. A split second before he is about to turn back with a questioning look at Mando, an ear-splitting roar slices through the air and Kinai ducks instinctively.

A loud thud in front of him prompts him to look up and the teen's eyes widen with shock when he sees Stoick stepping off a blue dragon.

"Ah, Kinai! Good to see you're finally awake! You sure gave your poor Captain a scare last night. How are you feeling?" Stoick asks.

Kinai does not answer and he is still gaping with his jaw open when Mando laughs and steps up, clapping him on the back. "Look, what did I tell you, Kinai?" he grins. "There is no need to worry! Chief Stoick has made it clear that Berk no longer treats dragons as enemies. In fact, they have dragon trainers and even a dragon academy!"

"B-but Mildew said â€œ"

Stoick sighs. "Mildew doesn't exactly share the same sentiment as the rest of Berk, I'm afraid. Whatever he told you about the dragons is not true. We have long ended the war between us and we live together in peace now," he assures him.

Mando chuckles while moving over to pet Thornado on his head. "Imagine my surprise when I woke up this morning to see the chief doing his rounds on a dragon!" he says, brightening up when the Thunderdrum purrs affectionately.

"Aye," Stoick agrees, nodding his head. "I wasn't sure how you and your crew felt about dragons, so I thought it best to keep them out of sight. I didn't expect Thornado to snatch me up for a flight when his wing finally healed today. I am glad that you are not hostile towards them."

The doubt on Kinai's faces turns to hope. "Does that mean â€œ?" he asks Mando, a smile threatening to spill over his face.

Mando nods. "Go on, the rest of the crew has already packed up. We'll see you at the docks."

Letting out a whoop of joy, Kinai races down the steps, yelling a "Thank you!" at Stoick and Mando on the way.

* * *

><p>"This is bad, this is bad, this is so very bad!" Hiccup mutters to himself while scanning his surroundings.<p>

"How do we find something we can't see?" Astrid asks, squinting into the distance.

"The saddle is still visible, so if you see one floating about, there's our dragon," he replies, looking up at the sky. "Hookfang and Meatlug are searching the edges of the forest, Barf and Belch are keeping an eye out from the air, and the two of us are here on the ground. We've been searching for close to an hour now, where could it be?"

Astrid sighs in frustration. "Well, on the bright side, we haven't seen anyone around the village yet. They're all at the docks waiting to send the travelers off."

"Not everyone," Hiccup frowns. "Look!"

Turning to where Hiccup is pointing, Astrid spots Kinai in the distance, making his way towards the forest.

"What's he doing here? His ship's leaving soon," Astrid says, eyes narrowing in suspicion.

"Doesn't matter. We should probably warn him before it's too late." Toothless?"

"Stormfly, what is it?"

Growling, the two dragons begin to move towards the raven-haired teen, who is unaware of their presence. Hiccup and Astrid immediately go on alert, watching closely for any sign of the Changewing.

Then something moves behind Kinai.

Hidden against the backdrop of one of the wooden houses, a brown saddle shifts closer to the oblivious teen, but the Vikings see it.

"Kinai, look out!"

"Behind you!"

Astrid and Hiccup shout in warning as their dragons lunge towards him, but they are too far away and Kinai only has time to turn around when the Changewing finally reveals itself and pounces on him, pinning him to the ground with a claw.

* * *

><p>Author's Note: Next chapter should be the last. As always, thank you for reading! Comments are greatly appreciated :)

6. Chapter 6

****Disclaimer****: I do not own How To Train Your Dragon.

* * *

><p>The Changewing leans down and opens his mouth to lick the face of the teen underneath his claw, eliciting a happy chuckle.<p>

"Isee!" Kinai laughs. "I'm glad to see you too. I was just looking for you!"

Removing his claw, the dragon steps back to allow him to pick himself off the ground. Kinai turns around when he hears his name being called.

"Hiccup! Astrid!" he greets as the two rush over to him. His eyes grow wide with excitement when he sees their dragons behind them. "Wow, is that a Night Fury? And a Deadly Nadder!"

"Kinai, what?" Astrid begins breathlessly, trying to collect her thoughts. "Is that Changewing your dragon?"

"Yup!" Kinai confirms cheerfully, gesturing to the purple dragon next to him and rubbing his snout affectionately. "This is Isee. He's been with me ever since I was a kid."

Hiccup chuckles with relief. "Well, looks like you already have your own rider, huh?" he smiles at the purring Changewing.

"Wait, have you guys met?"

"We, er" got acquainted with each other while camping in the forest," replies Hiccup as he spots Fishlegs, Snotlout and the twins landing not far from them.

Kinai starts to look a little anxious. "He didn't cause any trouble for you, did he?" he asks, turning to address the others as they join the group. "I mean, he can be really playful sometimes, but he doesn't mean any harm"

"It's fine! Nothing bad happened," Astrid hastily replies before anyone can mention the Changewing almost burning off Snotlout's tongue with acid and attempting to steal Tuffnut's saddle.

"We should thank you in fact," Fishlegs speaks up, having overheard the conversation. "This is our first time encountering a Changewing and I must say we've learnt quite a bit about the species."

"Geek," the twins mutter simultaneously while Snotlout rolls his eyes.

"Too bad you have to leave so soon," Hiccup sighs. "It would have been a good opportunity to learn more about the Changewing, but I guess it can't be helped."

Kinai shrugs and offers him an apologetic smile. "Yes, well I" he stops when he spots the foreign object attached to his dragon's back. Moving over to inspect it, his eyes widen as he realizes that it is a

saddle. "And where did you get this from?" he asks Isee in confusion.

"Oh, he saw our dragons with their saddles and pestered Hiccup to make him one. Wouldn't leave him alone till he agreed to â€" Oof!" Snotlout says carelessly until Astrid elbows him in the gut.

"It's no problem, really!" Hiccup rushes to assure Kinai, who is starting to look increasingly distressed. "It's just a simple saddle, doesn't take much time or effort to build one."

"That'sâ€¦ that's very kind of you, butâ€¦" Kinai swallows nervously, his hands dropping from where he has been stroking the leather appendage. "I can't accept it," he says and lowers his gaze in embarrassment, unable to meet their eyes. "I don't have anything to give you in exchange for such a beautiful piece of work."

"Take it as a gift," suggests Astrid, smiling kindly. "I mean, Hiccup's already made the saddle, so you might as well use it."

"Yes, but â€" it doesn't feel right to me," he shakes his head insistently. "We don't take things we can't pay back."

"In that case, lend us your dragon for a while," Tuffnut pipes up with a smirk on his face. His twin nods enthusiastically and cracks her knuckles. "We've got some things we wanna do with it."

"Guysâ€¦" Hiccup says in a warning tone, narrowing his eyes in suspicion. The twins only respond with innocent looks.

"What if we said we wanted to play with Mildew for a bit?" Ruffnut asks gleefully.

That is all it takes for Kinai to agree with the plan.

* * *

><p>"So let me get this straight, you've had Isee for years and you never once thought about riding him?" Astrid asks skeptically.<p>

Kinai shrugs as he peers around the corner, watching the Changewing at work. "Believe it or not, it never crossed my mind," he admits, turning the saddle over in his hands. "I mean, we're at sea most of the time, so I'm usually helping Mando with chores while Isee either flies by himself or stays below deck. When we hit land, I'd bring him to a forest or someplace where he can hide safely because not everybody's friendly towards dragons."

"Well then let me tell you this, Kinai. Flying on your dragon? It's definitely an experience you'll never forget," Hiccup says, smiling at him.

"Shh! Mildew's coming out!" Snotlout hisses, and everyone quickly ducks back into their hiding place to watch the show.

"Fungus? What the blazes are you doing on the roof?" Mildew screeches, catching sight of his beloved sheep stranded high up on top of his house, bleating pathetically. "Get down here!"

Naturally the animal refuses to budge, so the Viking drags a ladder over and begins to climb, grumbling under his breath. When he reaches the top, however, Fungus's bleats start to sound from the ground. Peering over the edge of the roof, Mildew's jaw drops when he finds the sheep safely on the grass, staring up at him in shock.

"What the - ?"

Deciding that his eyes must have been playing tricks on him, he shakes his head and goes back to the ladder, but then he realizes that it is leaning on the other side of the roof.

"I could have sworn I climbed up from here!" he mutters, frowning.

But after making his way down, the Viking hears familiar bleating coming from the roof.

"Not again! Fungus, why are you back up there?" he snarls, waving his staff angrily. The sheep jerks his head towards something behind its master, but when Mildew turns around, no one is in sight.

Cursing, he heads back up again, trying to keep his eyes on the animal, but the moment his head rises above the base of the roof, Fungus is gone again.

Mildew growls in frustration and tightens his hold on the ladder, intent on making sure it stays where it is. Fungus starts bleating from behind and he lets out an enraged cry, snapping his head to glare at it.

And that is when he sees the sheep floating in mid-air, slowing approaching him.

Shrieking in a very un-Viking-like way, Mildew scrambles to the top of his roof, accidentally kicking his ladder down in the process as he rushes towards his chimney, clinging to it for dear life. Still hovering, Fungus flies circles around him while bleating loudly, causing all the blood to drain from Mildew's face as he gapes at the unbelievable sight.

It feels like hours before Fungus drops back to the ground and shuffles inside the house, leaving his master stranded on the roof.

* * *

><p>The teens are still trying to catch their breaths when they reach the bottom of the hill.<p>

"Did you see the look on his face?" Fishlegs snickers, clutching his stomach.

"I thought he was gonna pee in his pants!" Snotlout howls with laughter, giving the twins a high five for their ingenious idea.

Kinai is grinning uncontrollably at the payback to his 'master', unaware of Hiccup strapping the saddle back onto Isee. A horn sounds

in the distance just as Astrid challenges the other riders to a race back to the academy.

"Oh gods, Mando's waiting for me back at the ship!" Kinai exclaims, suddenly remembering that he has to leave soon. He quickly turns to the other riders as they mount their dragons. "Thanks for everything, you guys," he says gratefully, smiling at them. "I'm really glad I got to meet you."

"Same here, Kinai," Hiccup reaches out to shake his hand. "Have a safe journey, and come back to visit when you can."

"Will do," the raven-haired teen promises before facing his dragon. "Come on, Isee," Kinai pats the Changewing on his snout and starts to walk towards the docks. "We need to â€" Hey!" But he is abruptly lifted into the air as his dragon nips the back of his shirt and plops him on his back before spreading his wings.

Caught by surprise, Kinai scrambles to hold on to the saddle as Isee prepares for takeoff. "H-Hiccup! What do I do?" he yells nervously, gripping the leather appendage tightly.

"Just hang on!" Hiccup laughs before Isee gives a massive flap of his wings and launches off the ground, causing his rider to scream in fright as they quickly become airborne.

But as the other riders take to the skies and follow them to the docks, they hear Kinai whooping in joy with Isee under him, doing dives and twirls in the air as they fly towards the ships in the distance.

* * *

><p>Author's Note: I have to say this fic isn't my best piece of writing, so I'll probably revise it sometime in the future. But until then, thank you so much for taking the time to read this story. Thank you also to those who have followed this fic or added it to your favorites. I hope you have enjoyed it :)

End
file.